SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 4 MARCH 2018

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by ……. [your name, call sign and QTH]

You may tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings, at 08:15 Central African Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Central African Time in English, on HF as well as on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners may connect to ZS6JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League s web site.

Audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you can also sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news today:

THE SARL HAMNET 40 M SIMULATED EMERGENCY CONTEST THIS AFTERNOON

THE 2018 SARL AGM BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

and

SOTA SUMMIT TO SUMMIT EUROPE TO AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND ON 10 MARCH

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

THE SARL HAMNET 40 METRE SIMULATED EMERGENCY CONTEST THIS AFTERNOON

The popular Hamnet 40 m contest is on the air from 12:00 to 14:00 UTC this afternoon with phone activity between 7 063 to 7 100 kHz and 7 130 to 7 200 kHz. The contest is open to all radio amateurs in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique, Lesotho, Marion Island and South African Antarctica. Only contacts with these areas will count.

You and/or your Club can participate as a single operator stationary mobile station, a single operator portable station, a multi-operator portable station or a single operator base station. The exchange is a signal report followed by a three-figure number as per your category of participation. Please consult the 2018 SARL Blue Book before the contest starts for all the information on the contest. You will find an easy to use Microsoft Excel log sheet for this contest at www.sarl.org.za/public/contests/contestrules.asp

THE 2018 SARL AGM BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

The 2018 SARL AGM Booklet is available for download from the Members Only section of the League s web site. The booklet contains the invitation to the AGM, a copy of the proxy form, a copy of the National Convention Registration form, the agenda for the AGM, the minutes of the 2017 AGM, the

financial documents and the motions all in one document. The motions have also been posted on the SARL forum.

Please note the wording on the proxy form, please ensure the person you want to hold your proxy is going to attend the AGM! The Registration form for the National Convention does not cover your accommodation requirements. Accommodation must be arranged separately at Farm Inn www.farminn.co.za

CHRIS BURGER, ZS6EZ, WINS EE PUBLISHERS BEST TECHNICAL ARTICLE AWARD

Chris Burger, ZS6EZ, from the CSIR Meraka Institute won EngineerIT's Best Technical Article Award for 2017 for the article "TV white space for South Africa" which was published in the October 2017 issue of EngineerIT. It was co-authored by Chris and Dr Moshe Masonta. This article provides information on recent developments in policy formulation for TV whitespace wideband networks in South Africa as a solution for the ever-increasing demand for additional radio spectrum. To read the article click on the link in the SARL homepage.

SDR WORKSHOP AT NARC TO ADDRESS ANTENNA ISSUES

The next SDR workshop will be held at the NARC starting at 09:00 on Saturday 17 March. At the workshop, there will be a report back on the SARL RF Noise Monitoring Project. Other subjects to be covered include how to automate the uploading of the data to the server, an introduction to GNU Radio by Anton Janovsky, ZR6AIC, and a discussion on the best antenna to use for the noise monitoring project with Vincent Harrison, ZS6BTY. The cost will be R50 for SARL and AMSAT SA members and R100 for non-members. Registration details are on www.amsatsa.org.za or link from the SARL Home page. There will no facilities at the workshop to handle cash. Please use EFT.

THE SARL VHF/UHF ANALOGUE CONTEST NEXT WEEKEND

The first leg of the SARL VHF/UHF Analogue contest will be on the air from 10:00 UTC Saturday 10 March to 10:00 UTC Sunday 11 March 2018 with SSB, AM, FM and CW activity on 6, 4 and two metres, 70 and 23 centimetres and higher. You can participate as a Single Operator, a Multi operator, a Portable or Field Station and if you cannot operate the full 24 hours, then a Limited 4 Hour station.

Contacts must be two-way point to point. Stations exchange signal reports as well as their location, e.g. (latitude and longitude or full six-digit Maidenhead locator or accurate area/address/location). Copies of the VHF/UHF log sheet and summary sheet are available in MS Excel format at www.sarl.org.za/public/contests/contestrules.asp. The log sheet will calculate distances and multipliers automatically. Submit your log by 19 March to contest@sarl.org.za. Read the 2018 SARL Blue Book for all the rules.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Amateur Radio League.

82ND RSGB COMMONWEALTH CONTEST

The RSGB Commonwealth Contest will run from 10:00 UTC Saturday 10 March to 10:00 UTC Sunday 11 March 2018 with CW activity on 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 metres. Only stations operating from areas in the RSGB Commonwealth Call Area list may participate in this contest, visit www.rsgbcc.org/hf/information/codes.shtml. The exchange is a RST report and serial number, HQ stations will send a RST report, serial number and HQ.

TAK-TENNA ANTENNA INFORMATION REQUIRED

We are looking for any owners and users of the TAK-tenna antenna willing to share information and operational experience for a test project to be conducted at the Paardefontein National Test Range on the outskirts of Pretoria (www.paardefontein.co.za).

Although there is a lot of construction information available on the internet, a commercial model is now available with limited information. The commercial version will be formally tested later in the year at the National Test Range. If you have any information to assist with the test project, please contact L.P. Lindeboom on 083 629 1767 or e-mail to boom@paardefontein.co.za.

MARCH RADIO ZS

The March issue of Radio ZS has been available for download since Sunday 25 February from the League web site. The editor notes that only 359 downloads have been made as of Saturday 3 March.

WHEN PROPAGATION CONDITIONS ARE EXCEPTIONALLY POOR, WHAT CAN YOU WORK ON VHF?

When propagation is very poor on VHF, then you can still work hundreds of kilometres daily on Tropo Scatter with deep QSB, if you can run 400 Watts into a high gain Yagi antenna then even on the UHF bands. But if you do not have the high power, then you could still have fun trying to work Aircraft Scatter on VHF during the peak flight times of passenger planes. If you are equipped for digital operation for FSK441 or MSK144, then you could work more than 1 300 km on 50, 70 and 144 MHz via minor Meteors that are present most mornings. DX can be worked with normal power, whenever a satellite orbit crosses your sky, using normal power into an arrow-type Yagi for 144 and 432 MHz. Then of course, if you are one of the big boys then you could work almost daily worldwide DX on VHF, UHF and Microwaves via EME whenever the Moon is visible. There is never a dull moment on VHF and above!

SOTA SUMMIT TO SUMMIT EUROPE TO AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND ON 10 MARCH

In Summits on the Air (SOTA), one of the more difficult and therefore challenging actions is to communicate from one summit to another usually using low power and a simple antenna at both ends. Add to that distance and poor propagation and the challenge is enormous. This will not deter over 30 SOTA activators who are planning to climb again this year to summits in Europe, Canada,

South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Japan on Saturday 10 March. In time for long path propagation between Europe and Asia Pacific.

The summit to summit (or S-2-S) event will start around 06:30 UTC - for Long Path between Europe and Australia over the following 90 minutes or so. Despite predicted poor propagation there are from time to time openings even at the bottom of the solar cycle. It is the first time that South Africa is joining in and while contacts from there to Europe are unlikely, contacts over to Australia may take place. The ZS SOTA database has been extensively updated, visit www.sota.org.uk and look for a summit in your area to activate on 10 March.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at very low levels. There is currently only one tiny sunspot visible with no threat for serious flaring. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 30 m bands may provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a Diary of some upcoming events:

Today the SARL Hamnet 40 m contest and the ARRL DX SSB contest 5 March - the closing date for the Digital contest logs 8 March International Woman s Day 10 March the SOTA Summit to Summit event 10 and 11 March - the SARL VHF/UHF Analogue contest and the 82nd RSGB Commonwealth contest 12 March the closing date for Hamnet logs 17 March SDR Workshop at the NARC 19 March - the closing date for VHF/UHF Analogue logs 20 March - Autumn Equinox and the International Day of Happiness

To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item:

The popular Hamnet 40 m contest is on the air from 12:00 to 14:00 UTC this afternoon with phone activity between 7 063 to 7 100 kHz and 7 130 to 7 200 kHz. The contest is open to all radio amateurs in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique, Lesotho, Marion Island and South African Antarctica. Only contacts with these areas will count.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast

available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 4 895 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR, and read by …….

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

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